

The report accompanying H.R. 2475 also highlights the work of the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). Although EPIC is funded through DEA in other legislation instead of this bill because of its drug-related intelligence mission, its work is critically important to the U.S. national security overall. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure EPIC's activities are funded at an appropriate and consistent level.

In addition to highlighting the strengths of this bill, I must also note my serious concerns about the general oversight of systematic failures related to the handling and interrogation of detainees. While it is critical that we collect actionable intelligence from detainees to prevent future threats, it is imperative that we do so in a way that respects U.S. law, and international conventions and treaties.

Although there were some issues some of us would have resolved differently, H.R. 2475 is, on balance, a sound bill.

ROSE GARCIA, RECIPIENT OF THE
2005 NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP
MONTH HERO AWARD

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the accomplishments of one of New Mexico's most devoted citizens, Rose Garcia. This morning at the Anthony Community Center in Anthony, New Mexico, Rose Garcia is receiving New Mexico's 2005 National Homeownership Month Hero Award. For more than 20 years, she has worked to provide housing for residents of rural and urban communities along the U.S.-Mexico border. In her tireless pursuit of creating opportunities for affordable housing, Rose Garcia has made the American dream of homeownership a reality for thousands of New Mexican families.

With this award, the New Mexico Partners in Homeownership are recognizing Rose especially for her work on behalf of very low income, underserved and colonia populations. Colonias are rural border communities and neighborhoods that lack safe and sanitary housing, along with basic conveniences we take for granted, such as sanitary water and sewer systems, street lighting and roads. Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation, of which Rose is Executive Director, not only provides housing but also builds the infrastructure to support these neighborhoods.

There are many obstacles one faces in the quest to own a home. Rose Garcia helps her clients through every step of the process and provides special assistance in one of the most important aspects—education. Tierra del Sol provides homeownership counseling and training, before and after the home purchase. Residents are given the tools to help themselves—and begin a new tradition of ownership—and hope. Through her work for the last 23 years, Rose Garcia has helped countless otherwise neglected persons achieve the social and financial benefits of homeownership, despite economic and cultural challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to mention the only other recipient of this esteemed award—the Honorable Joe Skeen. Congressman Skeen was an ardent supporter of home-

ownership programs in New Mexico, and Rose Garcia worked with him in that endeavor. She continues this legacy, not only through her commitment to homeownership, but in her dedication, her creativity and her unflinching spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Rose Garcia on this well-earned distinction and express my gratitude for the dedication and innovation she has demonstrated. I commend Rose for the hard work she continues to perform, and I am proud to recognize her—a true model of commitment to homeownership—today before my colleagues.

“The American Dream of Homeownership.” For thousands of New Mexicans, Rose herself is a dream come true.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. GRESHAM BARRETT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that one of my votes yesterday, Thursday, June 23, 2005, was not recorded by the electronic device.

I ask that the RECORD reflect that I would have voted “yes” on rollcall vote #307 (On Agreeing to the Bradley Amendment to H.R. 3010).

DR-CAFTA

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my opposition to the proposed US-Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA).

Former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick led the team of U.S. negotiators who concluded what they consider to be a good trade agreement in DR-CAFTA, and President Bush signed it the summer of 2004. This agreement will not take effect, however, until it is formally submitted to the Congress for a straight up-or-down vote, pursuant to the fast-track trade negotiating authority that Congress approved in 2002.

Fast-track trade negotiating authority was first approved by Congress when the Trade Act of 1964 was enacted. As a result the Congress cedes much of its power to amend trade agreements negotiated by the President.

I voted against giving the President a 5-year extension of fast-track trade negotiating authority in 2002. Fundamentally, I believe Congress ought not cede such open-ended, blanket trade negotiating authority to any President. Nevertheless, the DR-CAFTA agreement has been negotiated by the President's representatives and will come before Congress.

International trade is not just inevitable, it is a good thing. But lowering the cost of goods and increasing their availability is not the single goal of trade. Trade done right helps lift the global standard of living and works to protect the irreplaceable environment we inher-

ited. Trade is about values. Trade agreements are not just about goods and commodities; they are also about what constitutes acceptable behavior in environmental matters, worker's rights, intellectual property, and so forth. We should make sure we export the goods we produce and not the workers who produce them.

Each new trade agreement entered into by the U.S. should be very closely scrutinized. Each ought to include the strongest enforceable worker rights and environmental safeguards attainable, like those included in the U.S.-Jordan agreement of 2000. Each should also include enforceable rules to protect intellectual property rights and guarantee access for U.S.-based corporations to foreign markets. This can be achieved in trade agreements if we enter negotiations with clear principles.

I voted against the Chile and Singapore trade agreements, for example, because the inadequate labor and environmental provisions included in them, in my estimation, failed to meet the negotiating objectives that Congress carefully spelled out in the 2002 law extending fast-track negotiating authority to the President. They did not provide, for example, that trade dispute settlement mechanisms within those free trade agreements afford equivalent treatment to trade-related labor and environmental protection as intellectual property rights and capital subsidies, and the impending DR-CAFTA fails in this regard, too. The agreement between the US and Jordan, on the other hand, is a fine example that good agreements are achievable.

I am troubled by the DR-CAFTA that the President has signed. The DR-CAFTA does not contain strong, enforceable provisions to protect internationally-recognized worker rights. Nor does it have any provisions for environmental safeguards. Such provisions are critical because they both preserve existing labor laws and environmental standards in the affected countries, and because they ensure that American companies will be competing on a more level playing field with our Central American neighbors. Without such provisions, U.S. companies and employees are forced to compete with countries that have no labor wage, working conditions, or environmental protections. The people of all countries lose in such a “race to the bottom.”

Mr. Speaker, I will vote against the DR-CAFTA when it comes to the floor of the House and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

APPLAUDING ASSISTANCE TO
MILITARY FAMILIES

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, “Operation Helping Hand,” a program of the Tampa Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), was recognized for its efforts to assist the families of service members wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

The James A. Haley VA Medical Center is one of four designated polytrauma centers within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Since the start of OIF/OEF, these trauma centers have served as regional referral centers for individuals who have sustained serious disabling conditions due to combat. Patients treated at these facilities may have a serious Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) alone or in combination with amputation, blindness, or other visual impairment, complex orthopedic injuries, auditory and vestibular disorders, and mental health concerns. Because TBI influences all other areas of rehabilitation, it is critical that individuals receive care for their TBI prior to, or in conjunction with, rehabilitation for their additional injuries.

"Operation Helping Hand" provides assistance to the families of the very seriously wounded and injured service members who were deployed in either Iraq or Afghanistan and are now receiving treatment at the James A. Haley VA Medical Center. The average hospital stay for the injured is approximately 45 days. The families of these injured service members travel from all over the country to be with their loved ones at this critical time.

"Operation Helping Hand" assistance ranges from providing rental or leased cars, bus or taxi fares, cell phones or phone cards to the families of wounded service members. The program also provides tickets to local amusement parks, movie theaters and restaurants to make these families more comfortable while they are in Tampa waiting for their loved ones to recuperate. The assistance provided allows families to focus on their loved ones' recovery.

This year marks the sixth year that Newman's Own Inc., Fisher House Foundation Inc., and the Military Times Media Group have joined forces to present the "Newman's Own Awards" which seek to reward ingenuity and innovation for volunteer organizations working to improve the quality of life for military personnel and their families. These organizations issued a challenge to all private organizations serving our military communities: "present an innovative plan to improve the quality of life for your military community and receive funding to carry out that plan."

This year, 177 organizations submitted nominations for the award. I am pleased that "Operation Helping Hand" received the top prize of \$100,000. Ten other organizations shared \$40,000 in grants.

I want to congratulate the Tampa Chapter of the MOAA and all the individuals involved in "Operation Helping Hand" for winning the Newman's Own Award. I also want to commend them and all the other award winners for their outstanding work in support of our military personnel and their families.

STATEMENT CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF U.S. RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, some prominent members of the Vietnamese community within my Congressional District have asked that I deliver a message to Con-

gress regarding human rights issues in Vietnam. I take this opportunity to express their sentiments on the heels of Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai's visit to the United States. I am convinced that while this is a historic and unprecedented visit, I believe that their concerns are equally important.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this statement be made a part of the official RECORD.

Vietnam is a nation that has a record of violating human rights and suppressing religious freedom. This has been recorded in the U.S. State Department's 2004 Human Rights report on Vietnam. The report declares that the governing party, the Communist Party of Vietnam, has restricted the freedom of speech, the freedom of press, and the freedom of assembly, freedoms that our nation holds so dear. The Vietnamese government also continues to hold political and religious prisoners. It prohibits human rights organizations and political, labor, and social organizations from forming or operating. The 2004 U.S. State Department report also found that government security forces have been known to beat, shoot, and even bear responsibility for the disappearance of its citizens. These are not the government activities of a free nation.

The United States must not ignore the oppressive practices of governments with which we build economic and military ties, for our relationships with other nations reflect our own national values and beliefs. While it is my sincere hope that relations between the United States and Vietnam will become stronger in the future, we must remember that our Nation prides itself upon protecting democracy and supporting human rights all over the world.

Although Vietnam has made steps toward progress, we have seen that it still partakes in practices meant to oppress its citizens. Therefore, it is my expectation that the United States will work with Vietnam to improve its grave human rights and religious freedom records so that we may continue to take steps to strengthen and broaden our ties with that country.

TRIBUTE TO MILDRED SPITZER,
VOLUNTEER

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the ageless energy, optimism and achievements of Mildred Spitzer, who at 100 years young brings a brightness and light to her community.

Mrs. Spitzer's volunteer service at the University City Children's Center, the Washington University School of Medicine, and Temple Israel are part of her lifelong commitment to serving society. Mrs. Spitzer has spent what should be her retirement years performing office work, working as the secretary of her retiree's group, and caring for infants. Mr. Stephen Zwolak, the executive director of the children's center, says that her work is "wonderful," and provides the "human touch [the babies] need to create attachment," a cornerstone of the center's educational philosophy. By all ac-

counts, she inspires others with her youthful exuberance and enthusiasm.

Mrs. Spitzer was born on April 22, 1905, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she also attended Temple University. While living in Summit, New Jersey, she founded a chapter of a Jewish educational charity. She was married to Harold Spitzer for 47 years and she is the proud matriarch of a family of three daughters, six grandchildren, and now six great grandchildren. Mildred Spitzer has resided in the First District of Missouri for the past 12 years. She is committed to regular exercise and played golf well into her eighties. She now enjoys playing cards and reading and takes pride in doing her own shopping and housework.

For her part, Mrs. Spitzer is humble and eager to thank God for her longevity, health, and happiness. Her philosophy of good—good will and good thoughts—is both pragmatic and profound, as she asks us all simply "What's the use in being cranky?" Her life stands as a testament to her kind spirit, faith and optimistic outlook.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Mrs. Mildred Spitzer before the U.S. House of Representatives for her many lifetime achievements, longevity, and ongoing vigor and energy. She has demonstrated an indefatigable love of life and a commitment to helping others. Mildred Spitzer is a national treasure and a source of national pride.

COMMEMORATING THE 33RD
ANNIVERSARY OF TITLE IX

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2005

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate an extremely important anniversary.

Thirty-three years ago today, Title IX, the landmark legislation banning gender discrimination in federally funded education programs, was enacted into law.

I adamantly oppose restrictions to Title IX. Recent "clarifications" to the law will only lead to allowing schools to avoid providing equal opportunities to female students.

For women, especially young women, Title IX is one of the most important pieces of legislation in the past half century.

Title IX helps those who need help the most, particularly in low-income areas.

Girls who participate in athletics at the high school and college levels are more likely to graduate with higher grades than their peers who do not play sports. The health benefits of exercise are well documented and girls who play sports often take their appreciation of exercise and activity into their adulthood.

Team sports prepare girls for success in the workplace by teaching the benefits of teamwork and tenacity at a young and receptive age. Athletics imbue girls with self-confidence they may not be able to develop elsewhere.

We must not interfere with Title IX's effectiveness. That is why I oppose the recent clarification and advocate for increased equality in sports for female students.